

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 and 22-34 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1-6, 10-14, 22, and 26 have been amended to more particularly define the invention. New claims 30-34 have been added. No new matter has been added.

In response to the Examiner's Election of Species Requirement, Applicants hereby elect the species of Species I (Figures 1-9, a first embodiment) on which at least claims 1-4, 6-7, and 9-14 are readable, with traverse.

That is, contrary to the Examiner's assertions, close study and review of the species indicate that the first and second species (Figures 10-11, a second embodiment, on which at least claims 4, 6, 8, and 9 are readable) should be joined into one.

Therefore, applicants have amended claims 1-6, 10-14, 22, and 26 and added new claims 30-34. New claims 30-34 are generic to all species. Applicants reserve the opportunity to file Divisional Applications for the non-elected species later.

Further, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's acknowledgment of the priority documents filed on August 28, 2003.

It is noted that the claim amendments herein are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims, or for any statutory requirements of patentability.

Further, it is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

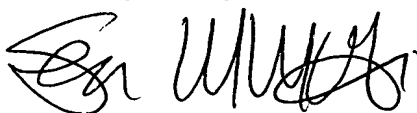
U.S. Application Serial No. 10/649,771 12
Docket No. N03409US
NIS.062

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-14 and 22-34, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

Early, favorable prosecution on the merits is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees or to credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully submitted,



Sean M. McGinn
Registration No.: 34,386

Date: 3/22/04
McGinn & Gbb, PLLC
Intellectual Property Law
8321 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 200
Vienna, Virginia 22182-3817
(703) 761-4100
Customer No. 21254